



THE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF
HADDONFIELD

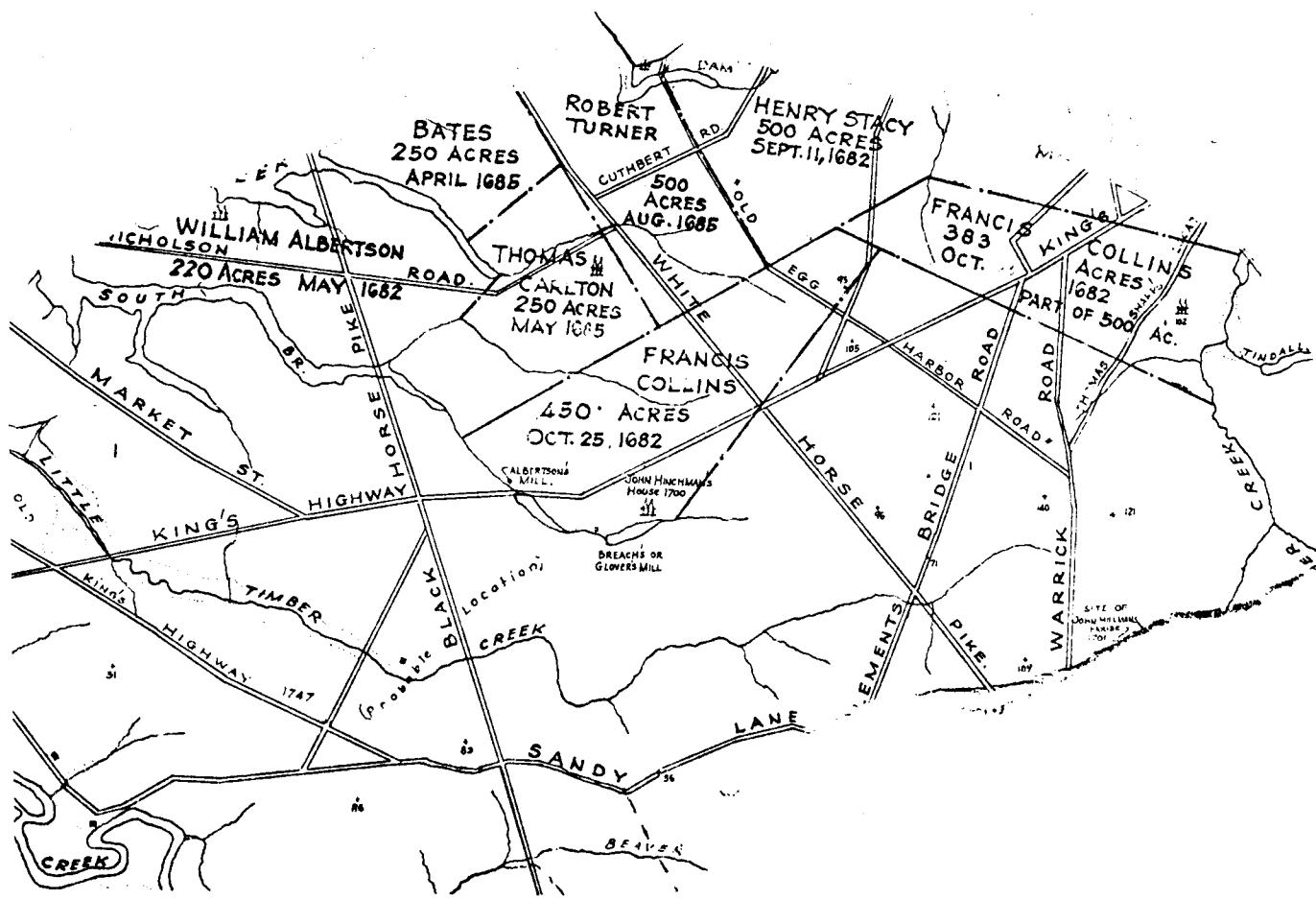
Volume 31, No. 3

343 King's Highway East

September 1986

"HOUSES, HEROES, AND GINGERBREAD"

The topic for the fall meeting of the Historical Society on Thursday evening, September 18 will be "Houses, Heroes, and Gingerbread". The speaker will be Mr. William Leap, a local historian and past president and twenty year member of the Camden County Historical Society. Mr. Leap is presently serving as Vice-President of the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey. He has authored a book on the history of the town of Runnemede. Prior to and since his retirement, he has done considerable field research on early 17th and 18th century buildings here in Camden County and his talk will give an overview of that study. We can assure you that his talk will bring us lots of interesting facts and anecdotes about our immediate locale. The meeting starts at 8 p.m. in the Haddonfield Borough Hall.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Social history, as defined by the great British historian of the 19th century, G.W. Trevelyan, is "history with the politics left out." This definition, is, in my estimation, not a totally adequate one, but it gets its point across. Social history is not the history that is drummed into too many students in high school - an endless, seemingly meaningless string of dates and facts about momentous events, usually political or military events. Social history is the average person - what he did and how he lived his life; it is the history of small villages and what made them tick.

When you think about it, nearly all of Haddonfield's history is social history rather than momentous political or military events. Yes, we had the dramatic events of the Revolution, but they passed by very quickly and Haddonfield continued on its way, as it would have preferred to have done even during the Revolution, as a peaceable, Quaker village.

The question the Historical Society of Haddonfield and we as people interested in Haddonfield's history must ask is "Why Haddonfield"? Bill Leap, past President of the Camden County Historical Society, wrote an essay, "Why Haddonfield?" for the 300th anniversary of the settlement of Haddonfield in 1982. He wrote about why Haddonfield flourished in the early 1700's and why it grew to be the largest village in the region by the Revolution. (His thesis is based on Haddonfield's strategic position in the early road and water transportation network.)

We must keep asking the question "why?" Why did this town, with a history of tavern keeping, become an early temperance town? "What" was life like in Haddonfield and "how" did it differ from its neighbors or "how" was it alike? "Who" were the people who lived here - ordinary people - and "how" did they make their living? The questions and challenges are many and it is our charge to bring them to light and to sort out fact from legend (and possibly try to discover why the legends grew up). The process of researching the questions is as interesting and challenging as the end result.

Douglas B. Rauschenberger

RESEARCH FACILITIES

Greenfield Hall and the Gertrude Hess Memorial Library are open Tuesday mornings from 9:30 - 11:30, Thursday afternoons from 2 - 4 and the 2nd Monday of each month from 7 - 9 p.m. Stop in and take a tour with librarian Kathy Tassini. You may find answers to your genealogical questions, learn when your house was built, or just browse through the collections and learn some of the little known fascinating facts about olden times.

GENEOLOGICAL QUERIES

Looking for your ancestors? Send requests to the editors by October 15 and as many as possible will be published.

DILKS, DILKES Anyone having information is urged to contact Mrs. Jane Dilks Brahms, 303 Briarwood Avenue, Haddonfield, NJ 08033 phone 609-854-4608.

GOING... GOING...

Auction Day will be October 4 from 10 - 2 at Greenfield Hall. Mrs. Richard Walter is Chairperson of the event. If you have any items you wish to contribute, the Society will greatly benefit. Plan to attend for a fun time and buy the unusual items you have always wanted.

HADDONFIELD CROSSROADS OF THE REVOLUTION

General George Washington wrote a letter on October 7, 1777 ordering two regiments (Colonel Green's and Colonel Angel's) to march from Bristol, across the Delaware to Burlington, into Mount Holly and from there to Haddonfield. The troops were to go on to Woodbury and defend Fort Mercer at Red Bank.

On October 21, 1777 General Washington wrote another letter from his White Marsh headquarters warning of 1,000 to 1,500 Hessian soldiers in the vicinity of Haddonfield.

The Hessians, who had marched through Haddonfield on the way to battle, camped here for the night. Late on the afternoon of October 22, 1777 they began an assault on Fort Mercer, now called the Battle of Red Bank.

The continental troops under Colonel Christopher Greene defeated the Hessians who were commanded by Count Donop.

Four hundred of the Hessians were wounded or killed. They returned weary after the battle through Haddonfield on their way to Philadelphia. Some died en route and were buried at the Marple graveyard at Clement's Bridge Road while others lie in the burial ground of the Religious Society of Friends in Haddonfield, which served as a hospital to both sides during the war.

DOWN AT THE HADDON FORNIGHTLY

Recently a stranger in town attended a wedding at the Haddon Fortnightly located on the corner of Grove Street and Kings Highway. She appreciated the well kept building used as a women's club house, and commented on the unusual architecture. She was most interested to learn that it was the site of a blacksmith shop owned by Samuel Thackara in 1835, that in 1846 Joseph Bates bought it and continued in the same business and that he sold it to the Methodist Church in 1856 after their original building burned down. The cornerstone for the church was laid on July 4, 1857 and the parsonage was built for Reverend Jacob B. Graw the same year. It was used by Haddonfield Methodist ministers until 1912 when the parsonage was moved to Warwick Road.

The Haddon Fortnightly was established in 1894 by 12 women who wanted a meeting place to promote the educational, literary, social and civic interests of the community. Since the meetings were held every two weeks they made up the name from the time and place where the meetings would be held. The building was called Artisan's Hall when the women purchased it for a club house in 1930.

GREENFIELD HALL

The headquarters of the Historical Society of Haddonfield is located in historic Greenfield Hall on Kings Highway in Haddonfield.

The property originally was part of a tract John Gill leased in 1725 from his kinsmen, Elizabeth and John Estaugh. He grew corn in the fields every four years, as stated in his lease, and his cattle grazed in the large open areas.

In 1747 John Gill II received some of this land as a gift from his father and built a home for his family. The section of the house now being used as a library is the only part of this home still standing.

When John Gill II died in 1796 his son, John Gill III, lived in the home. In 1838 John Gill IV inherited it upon the death of his father. He built a new home, which was completed in October, 1841 and October 21, 1841 he and Elizabeth French were married and lived there.

Greenfield Hall remained in the Gill family until the early 1900s. In 1960 it became the headquarters of the Historical Society of Haddonfield.

THERE'S AN OLD TOWN IN NEW JERSEY AND IT'S KNOWN AS HADDONFIELD

In 1721 John Haddon gave the Religious Society of Friends a deed so they could erect a meeting house on the land. In these records the name "Haddonfield" is used. However, the first mention of the name officially was on September 11, 1735 when a special town meeting was held to raise money for the poor.

In that same year of 1735 some of the leading citizens of the area were named to represent the people. Timothy Matlack was made a Freeholder, Samuel Clement was named a surveyor of the highways, and John Gill became the assessor.

Please send material for the November Bulletin to the editors by
October 15, 1986

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HADDONFIELD

Greenfield Hall

**343 King's Highway East, Haddonfield, New Jersey
08033**

Non-Profit Organization
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT No. 118
Haddonfield, N. J.

MRS RUBY B OBERST
52 SHERWOOD PL
VINCENTOWN NJ 08088